government agency officials' relatively unworried reaction to research team’s findings indicating the presence of pesticides in groundwater reflects longstanding public policy addressing surface and groundwater as separate domains. The interaction between both sources is only beginning to be addressed in social science research.

Apart from the strengths indicated above, the volume excels in the discussion of methodological approaches employed as well as in addressing the geography of water production and pollution. Moreover, in addition to the impressive range of geographical territory dealing with the Americas, through other case studies and contributors’ overview of extant literature, the book covers several other parts the world. The book is also an excellent example of conversations and collaborations across disciplinary boundaries and partnerships built with colleagues based in the research locations. This edited volume will surely become an essential reference for future anthropological research on the overlapping areas of drinking water and health, water uses and water quality, and sanitation. It will stimulate further investigations related to the critical question of the disparities produced by the interactive forces involved in how water supply is supplied and water demand demanded.

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Myths of the Archaic State deals with the evolution of the earliest cities, states, and civilizations predominantly in Mesopotamia and secondarily in Egypt, South Asia, China, Mesoamerica, and South America. As the title suggests, Norman Yoffee (p. 7) states that the history of neoevolutionary theory in archaeology is the evolution of a factoid (a speculation that has been repeated so often that it is taken for hard fact). Neoevolutionism has been so perpetuated by archaeologists that it has resulted in circular reasoning about the nature of ancient societies and the process of social change. “Neo-evolutionism,” as Yoffee adds on page 8, advocated a “new taxonomic innovation” that could “arbitrarily rip cultures out of context of time and history and place them, just as arbitrarily, in categories of lower and higher development.” Yoffee refers to the typologies devised to measure societies in a ladder of progressiveness (band, tribe, chiefdom, kingdom, and state) still found in many introductory anthropology textbooks today. He criticizes attempts to create categories of human progress and to fit prehistoric and modern “traditional” societies into them—an idea that stems from the 19th-century founders of social cultural evolutionary theory, Lewis Henry Morgan and Edward Tyler, and which was represented in the mid-20th century by Leslie White (1943, 1959) and Julian Steward (1955).

Myths of the Archaic State includes social, cultural, and archaeological information to deconstruct ideas such as that archaic states were basically totalitarian regimes ruled by despots who monopolized the flow of goods, services, and information and imposed “true” law and order on powerless citizens; that they enclosed large regions and were territorially integrated; and that prehistoric representatives of these social types can be correlated, by analogy with modern societies reported by ethnographers and archaeologists, such as David Wilson’s excellent book, Indigenous South Americans of the Past and Present: An Ecological Perspective (1999).

However, Yoffee objects that early states were not totalities nor should they be described as essentially content-free, abstract models that say little about how people lived or understood their lives. Complex social systems differ from simple essentially in the degree and nature of social differentiation. Complex societies have institutionalized subsystems that perform diverse functions for their individual members and are organized as relatively specific and semi-autonomous entities. Further differentiation, in normative social evolutionary thought, leads to problems of social order and to a need for generalized centers of political and economic administration that provide the linkages in these consequently functionally interrelated parts.

The book contains archaeological and ethnohistorical evidence from the earliest states that these linkages were very weak and that centrality was mainly concerned with the creation of new symbols of social identity, ideologies of power, and representations of history. The emergence of a political center depended on its ability to express the legitimacy of interaction among the differentiated elements: by acting through a generalized structure of authority; making certain decisions in disputes between members of different groups, including kin groups; maintaining central symbols of society; and undertaking the defense and expansion of the society. “It is this governmental center,” Yoffee emphasizes with italics on page 17, “that I denominate as the ‘state,’ as well as the territory politically controlled by the governmental center.” Neoevolutionary theory does not explain how the evolution of states included increasing degrees of social and economic differentiation that were recombined in a distinctive manner. Neoevolutionists spent too much time attempting to decide whether a complex society was a state or chiefdom. Yoffee’s rule about how to identify the ineffable presence (or absence) of the earliest states: “If you can argue whether a society is a state or isn’t, then it isn’t” (p. 41).

Chapter 3, The Meaning of Cities in the Earliest States and Civilizations, contains a chart of the area and population size of the earliest cities mentioned in the text, along with references to scholars who have studied these cites. It also includes 35 maps of these cities, along with one of Ann Arbor, Michigan, Yoffee’s alma mater, and one of New Orleans in 1765. This and subsequent chapters contain a wealth of information that incorporates the work of archaeologists and classical scholars.
Chapter 4 demonstrates that in the first cities, states, and civilizations, differentiated social groups became recombined in cities. Cities were nodal points of pilgrimages, exchange, storage, and redistribution, as well as centers for defense and warfare. The countryside was also restructured with new identities as citizens were created, but this did not entirely supplant existing identities as members of economic, kin, and ethnic groups. Cities forged identities with citizens in other cities who shared a common, if created, heritage, which was maintained and reproduced over time.

Chapter 5 contains case studies of identity and agency in early states—how great men achieved status and transformed traditional societies by getting access to guns or iron axes, as K. V. Flannery (1999) put it. Cities generate the development of new social roles, new identities, and the degree to which these roles are embedded in the political structure or free floating with respect to emerging relations of power. This chapter contains an interesting section entitled “Imagining sex in an early state,” which discusses na-ditus who were real estate ladies of the Old Babylonian period and kezertus at Kish who had distinctive hairdos, sang songs, and danced in cultic performances. The lives of these women were remote from state intervention, examples of what states do and cannot do and how individuals construct their lives to the extent and under the circumstances they can.

Chapter 6 deals with collapse of ancient states and civilizations. Stability in states is maintained when those in the periphery consider that the resources they provide the center also return benefits to them. These benefits are the circulation of goods and services, the settlement of disputes, and the creation of values and symbols that supply this-and other-worldly well-being. Here and throughout the book, Yoffee points out that in ancient states or civilizations the periphery was never monopolized by the state, neither in the bases of organization nor in the internal management of produce resources. The goods and services required by the state for its continued stability must be acquired from the traditionally organized groups that provide them in return for real and perceived benefits. States collapse when the center refuses to incorporate the needs and goals of local leadership in the formulation of political goals and when it attempts to replace the beliefs and values of peripheral groups with the beliefs and values of the central ruling elite. Collapse ensues when the center is no longer able to secure resources from the periphery, usually having lost the legitimacy through which it could distribute goods and services of traditionally organized groups. This chapter contains a detailed analysis of the collapse of Mesopotamian civilization and its regeneration.

Chapter 7 contains explorations of social change and points out more weaknesses of the old neoevolutionist band–tribe–chiefdom–state taxonomy. Societies have their own histories and cannot be relegated as stages in overall global trajectories towards states. Certain societies were not only not on a putative, normative pathway to statehood but also resisted such a social trajectory. Examining Chaco Canyon from about C.E. 900 to 1150, Yoffee points out that Chaco culture did not end and that collapse is really a species of cultural transformation.

Chapter 8 is an attempt to resolve some of the issues facing archaeologists: namely, being seen as magicians able to bring a hidden past amazingly back to life, on the one hand, and as scholars with contradictory and multiple versions of the past, on the other hand. Comparisons are necessary, and so is the explanation of causes and effects. Social evolutionary theory requires a revivified comparative method that importantly includes comparisons of developmental sequences. The primary rule is to understand the past on its own terms, insofar as this can be imagined. This chapter ends with weak praise, “I do not say that the game is easy; I do think we’ve made a good start.”

Yoffee discusses the last myth in chapter 9: namely that cities, states, and civilizations are rare and precious entities in the evolution of human societies and so require special explanations for their development. This is based on a fallacy of time, because most of human prehistory consists of hunter-gatherer societies, states—which rest on agricultural surpluses—have been reckoned atypical. Histories of societies that do not become states require as much explanation as various kinds of earliest states.

In critique, this is an exceptional book, written for scholars of anthropology and classical studies. The book contains latest research on many parts of the Middle East, as assimilated, analyzed, and explained by a careful and insightful scholar. It also deconstructs neoevolutionary theory as being too hierarchical and typological. The author supplants it with a social evolutionary theory that is more processual, dynamic, and flexible. Finally, the author presents many illustrative examples of the daily lives of these ancient peoples. This book provides a summary update on social evolutionary theory and an excellent source for the earliest cities.

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Contemporary perceptions of the Tehuantepec Isthmus in southeastern Mexico rest on the vivid portrayals of its
and aged between 17 and 22, and became alcoholics when Perceptions from Colombia and Guatemala. Unfortunately, there is no
analysis of the possible sources cluded; these range from the humanitarian flight pilot who of these weapons, which leaves hanging the
obvious ques? is also a smuggler to the children who live in storm drainstion: Where do kids get rocket launchers? 182 American
Anthropologist • Vol. 108, No. 1 • March 2006. widely criticized within anthropology, however, for many of the same reasons that
are still invoked by those who are uncomfortable with advocacy and intervention. Although both approaches had relatively
circumscribed impact on the discipline, they laid the groundwork for sub-sequent approaches that also emerged from explicit con-cerns
with issues of power and advocacy. In fact, more recent applied approaches have actually been far more critical of overt or even
passive collusion with structures that con-tribute to oppression and injustice than had been the case for much of the work in basic
anthropology (e.g., Baer et al. 2004; Castro and Singer 2004; Johnston and Downing 2004; Singer 2006a).4.